

Swedish Company Breaks Mould in Suzhou for Medtech Suppliers

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Karl Stillman, Rosti

The landscape of medical manufacturing in China today looks an awful lot like the automotive sector did 15 to 20 years ago, says Karl Stillman, Regional Sales Director, Asia, for injection moulder and contract manufacturer [Rosti](#). Back then, the automobile industry had not yet realised high-volume output, and "global automakers were looking for good manufacturers in China. Those companies that got in early had many opportunities," says Stillman. "The same thing is happening now in the device sector," he adds, spurred, in part, by China's massive investment in [healthcare reform](#). Rosti is practically a case study of these market dynamics at work.

Headquartered in Malmo, Sweden, Rosti opened a facility in Suzhou, China, in 2001 to mould mobile phone housings. Explosive growth ensued, and, after doing some research on the medical manufacturing market in

China and having conversations with medical multinationals, Rosti decided to build a facility devoted to medical manufacturing in 2009. Production started in 2010 in the ISO 13485-certified plant, which includes a Class 8 cleanroom.

"We built our facility in China to the same standards that we apply in Europe," says Tez Kurwie, International Sales Director. "The layout, capital investment, quality systems . . . we ticked all the boxes typically required by medical device companies. It was more of the same for us, really, but what is more of the same when it comes to Europe is different in China. We stand out," says Kurwie. Business has been brisk, and the company is already planning for expansion and might even add another medical-purposed production site in the very near future.

The company currently only does business with foreign-owned device manufacturers in China, but Stillman has been doing research on the home-grown medical device industry, where he sees tremendous potential. "A significant number of Chinese medical device companies are now getting most of their revenue from exports, and there are manufacturers that are buying up western companies," notes Stillman. "These companies cannot be ignored. We are not doing business with them right now, but they are on our radar. Companies that want to sell their products outside of China must apply international standards," he adds, "and that affects the entire supply chain."



That's good news for Rosti and, indeed, other providers of contract services with expertise in medical manufacturing. "We are estimating 5% to 10% growth year on year," says Kurwie. "But this is China—that could easily double!"

The 1000 sq m plant includes:

- a Class 8 cleanroom for assembly operations and changing rooms certified to ISO 13485
- two Class 7 labs certified to ISO 14644
- a fire control system certified to ISO 14000
- a dedicated purified water system specified to ChP2010
- a Sumitomo IntElect 180 all-electric injection moulding system designed for cleanroom use.

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